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GREEN WINGS



DOROTHY LERMING



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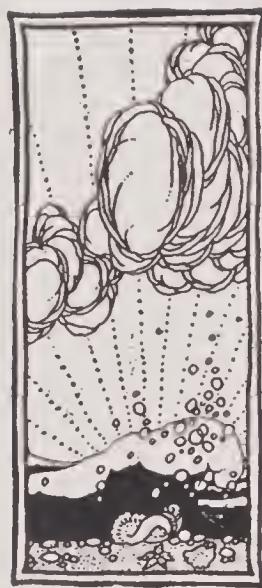
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◎GREEN◎WINGS◎



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DEDICATED
TO
THE MEMORY OF MY MOTHER

BIRDS chirping happily in leafy trees,
Green grass and summer gardens stretching fair,
The scent of woodlands wafted on the air,
The whir of crickets and the hum of bees,
And children's merry voices—all of these,
And bits of song, and flights of fancy rare
To violet realms, I, in fond memory, share
With her whose laugh still lingers on the breeze,
Her, whose soul shone with purity, and smiled
In love's enduring light, forever young,
And by earth's selfish grovelings undefiled.
. . . Each lilting, love-tuned melody that's sung,
Calls to her name; for though she is not here,
Her face, in Beauty's image, hovers near.



Photo by Hutchinson

Audrey Brewster

GREEN WINGS

SPRING on green wings comes lightly o'er the land
And kisses nature to a sweet awaking,
Spring, the immortal goddess, the divine one,
Making her eternal pilgrimage toward beauty.

She clasps earth's bosom in her twining arms
Until its heart throbs out a thousand raptures;
She sings to it the starry songs of wonder;
She sprinkles its tired eye-lids with the pollen of enchantment
And wafts the incense of a myriad blossoms.
The signet of the dawn is on her forehead;
Her eyes are lit with love's immortal vision.
She wings into the gold mists of the future
And beckons us with whispering hopes to follow.
. . . O fair, ethereal one, white-breasted,
Wooing us with a lover's tender graces,
Who shall resist the charms of thy allurement?
Who but shall bow before thy radiant presence?

* * * * *

Life in its essence is divine renewal,
Building its way in progress hour by hour
Unto sublimer beauty. Men who ride
On the high wave of ecstasy, and pour
Freely the wine of love from open souls,
Ever refill from life the emptied cup,
Ever renew, revitalize, expand,
And to the tune of nature's throbbing rhythm
Mount bravely on to fairer altitudes.

. . . He who forever follows Spring is—Youth.

* * * * *

We stand together on the mountain-top
In the clear radiance of each other's eyes.
There is a dizzy fragrance and the beat of wings,
Green wings that throb with ecstasy, and shine
With dripping splendors captured from the dawn.
It is the Spring, the goddess; see, she calls us.
Her arms outstretch, her flower lips woo with laughter.
In her embrace we shall find youth eternal.

. . . Beloved, come—let us ride on, ride on!



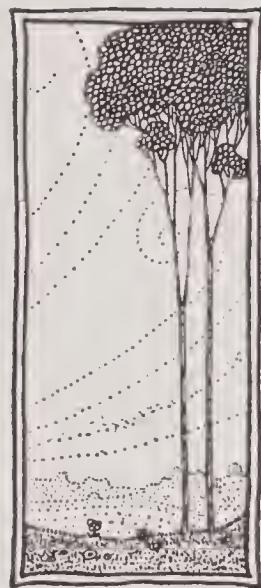
GREEN WINGS

• BY •

DOROTHY LEEMING

ILLUSTRATED
BY
GORDON ERTZ

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5 July 1921

◎ CONTENTS ◎

SONNETS

Youth	16 ..
The Bond	18 ..
Sparks	19 ..
The Artist	20 ..
My Father	22 ..
The Meeting	23 ..
Kismet	24 ..
Little Things	26 ..
God	27 ..
Ships	28 ..
Service	30 ..
To Donald Robertson	31 ..

SONGS

Land O' Dreams	34 ..
Gypsy Heart	36 ..
My Darling	37 ..
Beauty's Cradle	38 ..
Ode	39 ..
Maytime	39 ..
Chorus	39 ..
Song of the Gypsy	40 ..
Dreamer of Dreams	41 ..
Music	42 ..
The Earth Star	43 ..
Sweetheart	43 ..
Land of the Still-May-Be	44 ..
Spring	46 ..
Cherries	47 ..
Love's Dictate	48 ..
Inadequacy	48 ..

◎ CONTENTS ◎

Carols	49
Brides and Roses.....	50
Blues Eyes.....	51
I Love You.....	52
Urge of Spring.....	54
Expectancy	55
Flowers of Spring.....	55
With a Heigh-Ho.....	56
My Song.....	57
Please	58
A Fancy.....	59
Fairies	60
Vague Sweetness.....	62
When a Man Loves.....	63
A Plea.....	64
What's a Poet For?.....	65

VARIOUS VERSE

Aspiration	68
The Window.....	70
Stepping Stones.....	71
Disillusion.....	71
Experience	71
The Pioneer.....	72
Heaven	73
The Workman.....	74
The Wall.....	74
Progress.....	74
Salvation	75
Vision	76
The Dreamer.....	78
Eyes	78
Little Ships.....	79

◎ CONTENTS ◎

The Future.....	80
Co-operation	81
Fairy Feet.....	82
Twilight	82
When Beauty Walks.....	82
Out of Doors.....	83
The Poet's Ear.....	84
The Presence.....	86
Milestones	87
The Unchaste.....	87
Love's Tanglewood.....	87
A Dedication.....	88
The Rosebush.....	89
Wisdom	90
Perspective*	90
House of My Dreams.....	91
Your Heart and My Heart.....	92
Enshrined in Beauty.....	94

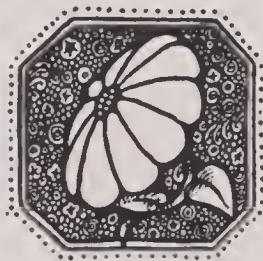
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Youth	17
The Artist	21
Kismet	25
Ships	29
Land O' Dreams.....	35
Land of the Still-May-Be.....	45
I Love You.....	53
Fairies	61
Aspiration	69
Vision	77
The Poet's Ear.....	85
Your Heart and My Heart.....	93

* Courtesy of "Telling Tales."



◦ SONNETS ◦



YOUTH

YOUTH is the lord of life, the reigning king
Of beauty, with heart undefiled and true,
Clothed in the shining radiance of the new,
Forever smiling through the eyes of spring.
Let us to Youth our dower of homage bring:
 Not for warped age the pathway let us strew,
 But to the rightful monarch yield his due.
To Youth, to Youth, let hearts forever sing!

There is no age in mind. How then shall man,
 Whose essence is of mind, age and decay?
 'Tis but the mortal edifice of clay
Which moulders: yet the spirit ever can
 Its temple's form renew, and strong and free,
 Ride down the years to immortality.



THE BOND

WHEN two are drawn together on life's sea
Of changing tides, 'tis proof their spirits hold,
Even though it by no outward sign be told,
Some element of similarity.
May one not well then search most earnestly
His inner nature as its ways unfold,
To find if from its dross or from its gold
Is sprung each new-found bond of harmony?

Each one of us within his soul must own
Some little spark which he has named his best.
But ah, how seldom 'tis its faltering tone
Which wakes an echo in another's breast!
. . . Such as it is, it is my best alone
Which speaks to you: you overlook the rest.

SPARKS

OUR thoughts are sparks which, outward struck from mind,
Fly to the heaven's four quarters, setting fire
To countless other minds. There's no desire,
No fear, no joy, no sorrow, lies confined
Within one bosom's keeping. Of its kind,
Each wakes to life a far, antiphonal choir
Of answering echoes. Soul will soul inspire.
All life is one and spirit intertwined.

You, who with kindness go upon your way,
With pulsing warmth, and glad vitality;
Who set the pure, sweet tides of being free
By unrestrained giving—day by day
You add in spirit to life's harmony.
. . . Can man, than that, earn greater tribute, pray?

THE ARTIST

I DO not want to be a pale pastel
Upon the page of life, etched airily
In frail moon tints; but painted bold and free
In flaming shades, whose radiant splendors tell
Of hopes that throb and ecstasies that swell
Within my bosom like a pulsing sea
Of music. Let my life's expression be
Fired with the wine of youth in every cell.

Each man's an artist sitting 'neath God's sky,
Before his easel, painting day by day,
The vision that is captured by his eye,
Upon the canvas of his life. Each may
Paint as he will, in rapturous tones or gray;
The rainbow's colors on his palette lie.



MY FATHER

THERE is a race of men, which blood can claim
From every country, and whose heritage
Has been passed nobly down from every age
Since man took on the proud, immortal name
Of manhood. Its fair glory naught can shame.
Majestically it walks across the stage
Of mortal life, nor does it seek the wage
Of paltry earthly dignity or fame.

. . . My father to that race of men belongs
Whose steps are graced by kindly courtesy,
And whose benignant spirit never wrongs
Its fellowmen; whose inborn chivalry
Is still the lord of circumstance. . . . Heaven's songs
Name it the race of God's nobility.

THE MEETING

GOD grant that I may know you when you come;
That we may look into each other's eyes,
And in that throbbing moment realize
Life's ecstasy. Shall nature then be numb
In palpitating wonder; or shall some
Great glory, as a token, light the skies?
Shall music like the songs of angels rise,
Or heaven in hushed solemnity be dumb?

. . . Beloved, I am waiting for that day
In patient reverence, when our hearts shall meet
At last, and each in each, fulfilled, complete,
Shall blend. For some swift token then I pray.
Yet even if heaven flame not as a sign,
Love, when you come shall I not know you mine?

KISMET

WHAT is there that the journey holds more fair
Than is the meeting of a soul with soul
In harmony? The gray mists backward roll;
The heavens in starry radiance burst aflare;
Beauty in deathless loveliness lies bare.

. . . Does not some kindly destiny control
Our wandering feet, and even from pole to pole,
Guide heart to kindred heart with certain care?

Some men we meet and say we're pleased to know;
And some we meet and coldly hurry past;
Yet some with whom we linger as we go,—
Like straws for one brief moment wedded fast
Upon a river's ever-changing flow;
. . . While some we meet and merely say, "At last!"



LITTLE THINGS

WHO shall belittle those frail joys that thrill
Our human souls: the fragrant, dizzying touch
Of lips; the flashing smile; or the swift clutch
Of warm, encircling arms?—soft airs that fill
The silence for a moment, then are still,
Things that would seem too transient to hold much
Of pure, eternal beauty. Yet 'tis such
That spur our lagging footsteps up life's hill.

. . . Dear Heart, how should I crave free planes above,
How seek the airy vistas of the skies,
Had your soft whispers taught me not of love,
Had I not gazed at heaven deep in your eyes?
Or how, how gauge high hierarchies of bliss,
Had I not felt the pressure of your kiss?

GOD

EACH human soul beholds the shining face
Of the divine within the sacred light
Of holy passion. Beauty lingers bright
About the portals of love's dwelling place.
Our faltering eyes attain the power to trace
God's radiant smile, according to the might
Of each soul's ardor. Each may dimly sight
Some glimmering vision of eternal grace.

Beloved, when you come and lay your hands
Upon my brow, within their touch I know
Eternal mercy, and your whispers low
Speak words of truth my spirit understands.
. . . And when your eyes smile softly into mine
My soul stands face to face with the divine.

SHIPS

SHIPS sailing out . . . The thought drifts hauntingly
Before my fancy: dim, gray forms that glide
Into the mists, and on the shadowy tide
Vanish away . . . O far eternity!
Echoless voice! . . . Ships sailing out to sea.
Love bends her head the sorrowing tears to hide;
Round her chilled heart, Time, waiting by her side,
Tenderly folds the cloak of memory.

All life is change: yet weep not thou, bowed low
In sorest grief, but smile into the dawn
A brave godspeed. Ships come not back we know,
But sailing out to meet the radiant morn,
Ride ever on to beckoning lands more fair;
. . . And Love, on wings of hope, may follow there



SERVICE

THE Master, stooping, laved with gentle care
The feet of his poor followers. Tenderly
His hands performed the humble task. His knee
Uncushioned bent, his gracious weight to bear.
And kneeling thus in loving service there,
He brought the light of noble dignity
To clothe all deeds which, humble though they be,
Are by love's beauteous rendering made fair.

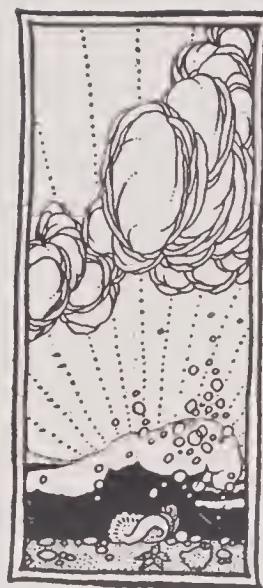
. . . O ye great gentle hearts, ye men of men,
Who dwell compassionate on the earth, and give
All that ye have, in measure full; who live
Life's gospel creed of service; ever again
Ye teach that he best answereth life's test
Of princely dignity, who serveth best.

TO DONALD ROBERTSON

YOU are the potter; I am but the clay,
Whose virtue is its willingness to bend.
Take it within your hands and to it lend
By magic deftness form and grace, I pray.
The fabric of my soul I plastic lay
In readiness before you, to that end.
Upon your skill as craftsman shall depend
The beauty wrought; upon mine to obey.

Creation is to no one hour confined.
Its underlying stream of vital breath
Pours out unceasing from the sea of Mind.
Each moment's passage holds both birth and death
Of outward form; but what you breathe to me
In spirit, lives to immortality.

An appreciation of Donald Robertson, actor and scholar, from a pupil.



◦SONGS◦



LAND O' DREAMS

YOU meet me by a crystal sea
Where silver sails are gliding
Out to the isles of Things to Be,
And hopes and fancies airily
Are riding.

You meet me 'neath a starry sky
Where suns and moons are singing,
Where breaths of springtime flutter by,
And souls, unfettered, soar on high,
Light winging.

You meet me at my mother's knee
When shades of night are falling,
When sprites and fairies venture free,
And Elfland's music, whisperingly
Is calling.

. . . You meet me in the Land o' Dreams
Where phantasies are playing,
Where Beauty's form, unveiled, gleams,
And fond Illusion's wistful beams
Are straying.



GYPSY HEART

I HAVE only a gypsy heart, my dears,
Which follows a gypsy trail,
And roves by day where the sunbeams play,
And by night 'neath the moonbeams pale.

The trail leads on to the east, my dears,
Where the end of the rainbow lies,
And the way is long, but my heart is strong,
And radiant and fair the skies.

I must bid you an *au revoir*, my dears;
Your hearthstone is warm and bright,
But the hillside calls through the cottage walls
And the stretch of the road gleams white.

. . . You scarcely will understand, my dears,
—And a gypsy heart's strange I ween—
But there's a tune that the south winds croon,
And a vision the stars have seen;

And I've only a gypsy heart, my dears,
So bid me not pause and stay.
The rainbow smiles through the rosy miles,
And I must away—away!

MY DARLING

O MY darling gave me a smile:
An April sunbeam slyly crept
Within me to beguile
Spring's dancing elves that slept.
O my darling gave me a smile.

O my darling gave me a rose:
The promise soft of things to be
—Swift joys that fancy knows—
Bloomed in the soul of me.
O my darling gave me a rose.

O my darling gave me a kiss:
I drained its cup of nectar sweet
Within the shadeless bliss
Of passion's moment fleet.
O my darling gave me a kiss.

O my darling then flew away:
So life rides on and lovers part;
O my darling then flew away
—But deep within my heart
Smile, rose and kiss still stay.

BEAUTY'S CRADLE

IN the topmost branch of the tallest tree
I builded a nest for Love and me.
I climbed the spirals of shining space
To find a height for Love's resting place.
I builded a nest so high, so high,
Its cradle swung in the starlit sky.

In the topmost branch of the tallest tree
I builded a nest for Love and me.
I feathered it with the silken sheen
Of silvery hope, and sought to glean
Fair star-dust out of the heavens, to line
The resting place for Love's heart and mine.

In the topmost branch of the tallest tree
I builded a nest for Love and me.
Beauty was born, and so brightly smiled
I almost thought that a changeling child,
Dropped by the angels, was come to rest
With Love and me in the tree-top nest.

In the topmost branch of the tallest tree
I builded a nest for Love and me.
Love nestled close and then flew away.
But Beauty whispered, "I—I will stay."
. . . And like a star she still smiles on me
In the topmost branch of the tallest tree.

ODE

WHERE'ER the winds are sweetest,
Where'er the skies most blue,
Where'er the flowers are fairest,
Where'er the gems are rarest,
Where'er my hope wings fleetest
—'Tis there my dreams meet you.

MAY TIME

MAY time in the garden,
Springtime in the heart.
Nothing in the cosmos
Can us ever part.

Love time, youth time, joy time,
As our spirits blend,
Birth time, lifetime—all time:
Time without an end!

CHORUS

THE green, green grass
And the blue, blue sky,
The earth so broad
And the heaven so high,
The red, red lips
And the hearts that sing,
All echo soft
'Tis spring, 'tis spring!

SONG OF THE GYPSY

YOU term me “homeless” because I call
No earth-built dwelling of plaster wall
By name of home, nor presume to bound
The shrine of love, by a plot of ground.
. . . But where men’s spirits in love agree
Is home to me.

It may be well to live walled about
By wainscot, locking the world without;
To cleave to those of some mortal tie
And let the rest of the world go by.
. . . But love’s green garden without a key
Is home to me.

It may be true that some virtue rare
Lies in the loathness of man to share
His realm of beauty. Perhaps his prize
But smacks the sweeter for hungry eyes.
. . . But life’s broad highway of equity
Is home to me.

The heavens stretch blue, and the world is wide.
Who binds the home where love’s smiles abide?
The wildwood croons to its fledgling young;
Up hill, down dale, is love’s carol sung.
. . . Where roams the wind o’er the hilltops free
Is home to me.

DREAMER OF DREAMS

O I am a dreamer, a dreamer of dreams,
And dwell in a shimmering sea
Of mistlight and starshine and glimmering gleams
Of beauty that beckon to me.
Some say that the world is a valley of gloom,
Where evil and ugliness meet;
Where heart-sobs reecho the soundings of doom,
And gladness goes down to defeat.
That Chaos, enthroned, in careless content,
Looks on at destruction, some say,

But the stars shine serene in the great firmament,
And I soar in my visions away
Where rainbows of promise are spanning the skies,
And music is filling the air;
Where breezes of springtime so fragrantly rise,
And all things as pure are as fair.
. . . For I am a dreamer, a dreamer of dreams,
And dwell in a shimmering sea
Of mistlight and starshine—where glimmering gleams
Of beauty e'er beckon to me.

MUSIC

IF I were an artist, I think I should paint
 In colors of rapture and light,
And try to envisage the beauty that shines
 In the heavens, unfading and bright.
If I were a singer, I think I should sing
 Some throbbing, wild-melodied song
That echoed, exultant, the burst of the spring,
 And made men's hearts valiant and strong.
If I were a poet, I think I should write
 The words that are vibrant with fire;
That tell of life's glory and wonder and might,
 That lifen and thrill and inspire.

. . . If I were a worker at any old thing,
 I think that, at least, I should try
To capture some strain in my work day by day
 Of the music that throbs in the sky.

THE EARTH STAR

FLING by the dreams of a heaven afar,
Some fabled and distant land.
Press close the gleams of this earthly star
—And come and hold my hand.

Man's heaven is love, and man's heaven is here,
But 'tis simpler to understand
When loving hearts clasp each other near
—So come and hold my hand!

SWEETHEART

SWEETHEART, when you are away
Many things I yearn to say,
But, alas, when we are met
All but one my lips forget!

LAND OF THE STILL-MAY-BE

I STRAYED to the Isle of the Never-Was
And the Land of the Might-Have-Been,
And a mermaid's form with clinging arms
Luringly drew me in,
Farther and farther in
To the shoal-bound Isle of the Never-Was,
With its realm of the Might-Have-Been.

She tortured me with the flaming smile
Of lips that I could not reach,
And she sang to me in a melting tune
That turned to a seagull's screech,
A hideous seagull's screech.
And round the Land of the Might-Have-Been
Gray skulls lay along the beach.

But ah, the Land of the Might-Have-Been,
O it was very fair.
A thousand glories shone forth like stars,
And rapture perfumed the air.
Eternal spring was there.
. . . Then God! I looked, and the mermaid's tress
Was a wig made of dead men's hair.

I turned from the Land of the Might-Have-Been
To the Land of the Still-May-Be,
Where lips that smile cease to mock the heart,
And men stride on strong and free.
. . . And never so fair to see
Was the dazzling Land of the Might-Have-Been
As the Land of the Still-May-Be.



SPRING

THE poets sing that old loves are best,
And maybe their songs are true;
But the robin builds on the bough her nest,
The spring's green leaves to my heart are pressed
—And I love the new loves too.

Still dear the petals of last year's rose
That fair in the garden grew;
But an unplucked bud on the rosebush glows,
A lilting breeze through the branches blows
—And I love the new loves too.

Each deathless kiss in my memory lies—
But the morn is fresh with dew;
The springtime smiles through your shining eyes;
Your throbbing heart to my heart replies.
O I love the new loves too!

CHERRIES

SOME like pomegranates and pears,
Some like peaches, plums, and berries.
I like cherries.

Part, because the birds in spring
Like them so, and chirp and sing
All around our cherry tree,
Holding joyous jubilee;
Part, because their flavor nips;
Most, because they're red—like lips.

Some like pomegranates and pears,
Some like peaches, plums, and berries.
I like cherries!

LOVE'S DICTATE

IF you love me, tell me so.
Let your words your ardor show.
Whisper all your burning passion
In a fiery lover's fashion.
Do not fear too oft to say
What you told me yesterday,
What you said an hour ago:
If you love me—tell me so!

INADEQUACY

IF all the stars were kisses
Which I might give to you,
O sweetheart, in the giving,
They would seem far too few.

If all the flowers were love-words
To whisper in your ear,
They'd not half tell the story
Which I would have you hear!

CAROLS

IF you feel it, say it,
Love's sweet mystic word.
Prithee why delay it
And keep bliss deferred?

Birds pour forth their carols,
Flowers breathe sweet perfume,
The great sun shines golden,
Nature smiles abloom.

Only man suppresses,
Wearing face forlorn,
Stifling love's caresses
Ere they have been born.

. . . There's too much of grayness,
Drab-toned winter's chill;
Sing life's song of gayness,
Let love's laughter trill.

When your heart throbs warmly,
Sweet my love, obey it.
Spring peeps o'er the hilltops;
If you feel it—say it!

BRIDES AND ROSES

JUNE'S the month of brides and roses;
I shall wed if he proposes.
Many months he's been away
But his ship comes in today.
Never bloomed a spring so charming
With a gayness so disarming,
Never shone the sun so brightly,
Never danced a heart so lightly.
There is laughter in the breeze,
In the budding flowers and trees.
June's the month of brides and roses;
I shall wed if he proposes.

I am waiting for his coming
With a pulse that's gladly thrumming;
Freshly costumed, chic and gay,
All in honor of the day.
O how sweet the world can sing
In the rapture of the spring!
. . . Some maids chance their hearts unmasking
Without waiting for the asking.
That is quite the modern way.
I'm old-fashioned, so I say,
“June's the month of brides and roses,
I shall wed—if he proposes!”

BLUE EYES

I HAVE not yet the finer sight
To read the gleams of astral light;
I cannot soar in visions high,
Beyond the power of earthly eye,
And glimpse the fair and crystal ray
Her spirit sheds. . . . I'm forced to say
I cannot read her aura's hue
—But I can see her eyes are blue.

They twinkle at me when she smiles,
In witching power that so beguiles
My heart, a thousand joy-nymphs dance
To meet the summons of her glance.
They hold a light so pure and clear
It seems to bring the heavens near.
. . . I cannot read her aura's hue
—But I can know her eyes are blue!

I LOVE YOU

THE poppy whispered it to the rose
That close beside her grew:
A little secret the south wind knows
—It is that I love you.

The comet twinkled it to the star
Across the heavens of blue:
A little secret that gleams afar
—It is that I love you.

The bluebird caroled it to the spring,
And so it must be true:
The sweetest secret a heart can sing
—It is that I love you.



URGE OF SPRING

LITTLE lost longings, fallen asleep,
Open your eyes to the smile of the May.
Come from your dungeons of winter, and peep
At the gay breezes and blossoms at play.

Longings that spring from the truth of desire
Nurture the world with their tendrils of fire.
Beauty must live by expression.

Little lost longings, fallen asleep,
Open your eyes to the light of the sky.
Joyously cleave to the mountain side steep:
Life has no urge that may not lift us high.

Longings that spring from the truth of desire
Nurture the world with their tendrils of fire.
Beauty must live by expression.

EXPECTANCY

A BUNCH of violets in a crystal vase,
A photograph, some filmy things with lace
Upon a chair, an idle April breeze
Stirring a rustling murmur through the trees
Outside the open window: in the air
A sweet, pulsating wonder everywhere.

And in the heart the little, singing tune:
“My love will be here soon, will be here soon!”

FLOWERS OF SPRING

HER eyes were bright as flowers of spring,
Her lips but made to kiss.
She gave her word, I gave my ring,
And climbed the heights of bliss.

She kept my ring, but not her word,
Yet still my toast is this:
“To eyes that pledge my hopes deferred,
And lips but made to kiss!”

WITH A HEIGH-HO

“I AM a miller’s lass,” she said;
But he replied, “Your lips are red.”
With a heigh-ho for station!

“Religious creeds forbid,” she said;
But he replied, “Your lips are red.”
With a heigh-ho for religion!

“It is a dusty road,” she said;
But he replied, “Your lips are red.”
With a heigh-ho for sorrow!

“Love is a fleeting thing,” she said;
But he replied, “Your lips are red.”
With a heigh-ho for the morrow!

MY SONG

GIVE me a kiss: it is morning—
A nice kiss to start the day.
I ne'er could begin it without one,
So give me a kiss I say.

Give me a kiss: it is noontime,
And deep is my spirit's need
For love's gentle and holy respite,
So give me a kiss I plead.

Give me a kiss: it is evening,
And the long day's work is done,
So seal it all with a kiss, dear,
A tender and soothing one.

. . . My song is: “Give me a kiss, dear.”
Forever through time repeat,
Forever, and over and over,
That luring caress so sweet.

If we sat in heaven's high glory
The thing that I'd say is this:
“Toss thither your harp and your golden crown,
And come and give me a kiss!”

PLEASE

WHEN you say, "Please," I can't resist.
I'm really tired of being kissed,
But every time I would say no,
And bid you haughtily to go,
With villain's wile you start to tease,
And say in wheedling accents, "Please!"

If you affected manner bold,
You'd find me dignified and cold.
If you poised suavity revealed
In your approach, I ne'er would yield.
But O dear me, I'm always kissed!
When you say, "Please!"—I can't resist!

A FANCY

AS I was drifting off to sleep,
A fancy came to me
That you were riding on the breeze
That entered light and free.
And that you stooped and clasped my hand
And kissed me on the brow
With lips of yearning tenderness
—I feel their pressure now!

In truth I knew 'twas but a dream
And you were far away,
And yet I pictured that your thoughts,
Out wandering at play,
Had entered o'er the casement's ledge.
. . . I wonder could it be?
As I was drifting off to sleep
A fancy came to me.

FAIRIES

IN the holes of thimbleberries
There are hiding tiny fairies
That peep out and smile at you
And sip little draughts of dew.
O such tiny folk they be,
That a raindrop seems a sea
On which love-crafts venture far;
And each atom is a star.
Yet their little hearts can beat
With a rapture just as sweet
As our human spirits know,
(Wise folk tell me it is so.)
And hold hopes and dreams as fair
As our human fancies share.
Wise folk tell me that they grew
Once as big as I or you,
And were mortals, dwelling high
On a hilltop, where the sky
Stooped to kiss them. But there came
A dark foeman of ill fame
With his scythe, to rend apart
Lovers twined in single heart.
And the gods in sympathy
Interfered to set them free,
And transformed them to a race
Too minute for time or space,
Crystalled in a shrine of dew
Where no foeman may pursue:
Wee immortals on green wings
Dwelling in The Heart of Things.
. . . They have tiny homes, I know,
Where the thimbleberries grow;
But when mortals peer inside,
Lightning quick, they run and hide.
That is why we never see
Their wee forms. O deary me,
How much I should like some day
To peep ere they ran away!



VAGUE SWEETNESS

YOU ask me if I am in love:
I really cannot say.
I only know that life grows blank
Whene'er he goes away,
And that it seems to hold some strange,
Vague sweetness when he's near;
And that none other's words e'er strike
As softly on my ear.

I only know there seems to be
Strange healing in his touch,
And that no other face or form
Lives in my thought so much;
That e'er his image through the day
Before my fancy gleams,
And in the nighttime when I sleep
Still dances through my dreams.

I only know all that is his
Seems strangely to possess,
E'en to mere trivialities,
A certain sacredness;
And that I treasure close his gifts,
And oh, could never bear
The letters written by his hand,
The least of them, to tear!

I only know that 'tween our souls
There seems, some way, to be
A little, throbbing, mystic bond
Of love and sympathy;
And that none other in the whole
Wide world, I like so well.
. . . But whether I'm "in love" or not
—Why that I cannot tell!

WHEN A MAN LOVES

WHEN a man loves,
His heart sings a song
Throbbing with joy
As he walks along,
And from his eye
Streams a crystal light
That bathes the world
In a film of white.

When a man loves,
Every gate swings wide,
Peace and goodwill
Travel by his side,
Cobble-stones rough
On the busy street
Smooth themselves out
To his echoing feet.

When a man loves,
His soul understands
Rapture and grief
Of a thousand lands,
And meets the smiles
And the falling tears
That have come down
Through a thousand years.

. . . When a man loves,
He at last divines
Why all of heaven
In sweet glory shines,
And why fair star
Chases star on high,
Time without end
Across the sky.

A PLEA

THE kisses that I gave to thee—
Perhaps thou didst not know—
Were little blossoms of delight
That in love's garden grow.

The kisses that I gave to thee
Were dewdrops shining fair
Upon the morning of a hope
That scarcely dawned aware.

The kisses that I gave to thee
Were little stars agleam
Within the airy nothingness
Of an enchanted dream.

. . . The kisses that I gave to thee
Lie locked within thy heart,
And from their silent dwelling place
May nevermore depart.

* * * * *

O prithee cherish tenderly
The kisses that I gave to thee.

WHAT'S A POET FOR?

SING a song o' sixpence,
What's a poet for
But to sing of raptures—
Then to sing of more?

If his soul grow dreary,
Have no joys to tell,
Would some common singer
Not serve quite as well?



◎VARIOUS VERSE◎



ASPIRATION

LIFE offered me the “good enough;”
I proudly tossed my head.
“I want the best, the foaming crest,
Of all you have!” I said.

Life offered me a half-filled cup;
I brushed it to one side.
“I want my cup filled red with wine—
Filled to the brim!” I cried.

Life offered me an empty kiss;
I coldly turned away.
“I want a kiss that tells but bliss!”
I haughtily did say.

And then Life courtesied and smiled,
And said, “Who ask, receive, my child.”



THE WINDOW

THE room was crowded with smooth, simpering men
And flabby women.

And there was a deafening chatter of flat voices
And the click of cups.

Round faces smirked at one another,
And the air was suffocating
With the tawdry cheapness of human thought.

. . . And suddenly I looked out of the window.

And the first little, joyous flecks of green buds
Were beginning to burst open on the trees.
Red-breasted robins hopped to and fro on the lawn
In poised activity.

In the distance, soft, undulating fields stretched out—
As if in slow vibration to a tranquil pulse.
And the deep sky above.
Smiled

In its calm, unfathomable blueness.
The late afternoon sun streamed down in glory
On all the exquisite beauty and freshness
Of a spring day.

Around about me the discordant hum of voices
And the warped activity still went on.

. . . But I looked out of the window.

STEPPING-STONES

THE most precious stones
That the wide world owns
Are the stepping-stones.

DISILLUSION

"TWERE idleness to chide the pearl
Which promises to be
A priceless jewel, and glimmers false
On closer scrutiny.

Its paltry beauty rather thank
For having caused the birth
Of passion's fervor—which may pass
To gems of shining worth.

EXPERIENCE

HAD I known what now I know,
I had never acted so.
Yet, had I not acted so,
Should I know what now I know?

THE PIONEER

BEHOLD the pioneer who walks alone,
With brow serene, and face turned to the skies;
Who dares to hew his path to heights unknown,
The light of dauntless courage in his eyes.

He stands, his shoulders set, feet firmly placed
Upon the solid basis of the ground.
His pose expresses naught of strife or haste;
His mind is clear, his footing sure and sound.

Around him surges ever the restless throng
Of little folk, who strive to block the way;
He passes them with gentle tread—but strong,
Yet tries to lead them onward day by day.

. . . He breaks a path to gleaming realms and new;
His soul knows naught of littleness or fear;
It shines forth, big and beautiful and true,
In radiance. . . . Behold the pioneer!

In appreciation of Harry Gaze.

HEAVEN

THE tired hearts crave rest. They vaguely feel
If they could only slip away, and steal
To some great, calm, serene eternal breast
And there sink down . . . and there sink down . . .
That heaven would be blessed.

. . . Poor tired hearts! too weary yet to know
That in eternal motion still is rest.
The mighty pendulum swings to and fro,
But pulses that in perfect rhythm beat
Feel no fatigue. Deep joy they feel and power
And tranquil peace.
. . . Heaven is not a pause,
An endless slack, but the poised riding on,
On life's high crest.

THE WALL

THAT man is great who clammers o'er
Without a slip or fall;
Great also he who tumbles thrice
And then—who scales the wall!

THE WORKMAN

I LIKE to meet the man who knows
That if his face were gone
And he no longer turned the wheel,
The world would still move on.

And yet who labors just as hard
As though the whole creation
Were counting on his strength alone
To further its salvation.

PROGRESS

THE goal that lures my heart's desire
Leads me a merry chase
As still more swift my steps pursue,
More swift it changes place.

SALVATION

NOT by aid of a lucky star
Shall man's soul wing its way afar.
No dark despot of frowning Fate
Casts his shadow o'er man's estate;
No strange whim of a god of Chance
Rules our lot. Nor need circumstance
Mould our lives, nor heredity
Shape the course of our destiny.

Nor indeed, shall another's pain
Strength and pureness have power to gain,
By their payment of law's full price
For us, entrance to paradise.
Never so! we must reach the goal
Each by toil of his inmost soul.
Never so! we must each atone
By transcendence of love alone.

Every step on my path must be
Patient made by none else than me.
Every thread of the life divine
Woven in by no hand but mine.
. . . Not by aid of a lucky star
Shall man's soul wing its way afar.
When in love I have paid the price
I shall pass into paradise.

VISION

I DREAMED the world stretched wide and fair,
And skies shone bright and blue;
That song and laughter filled the air,
And friends stood staunch and true.
I dreamed the Springtime brightly strewed
Her petals on my way,
And Happiness my steps pursued
With smile and garland gay;
That light-toed Rhythm blithely danced,
Unfettered, by my side;
And Beauty from each thicket glanced,
And Hope my heart did ride.
I dreamed Success bent down, at last,
And lightly kissed my brow,
And Honor named me as I passed,
And made her stately bow.
And then I dreamed,—O tender best!—
Love bared her sacred shrine
Within the sanctum of my breast,
And made heaven's garden mine.

I dreamed this in the long ago,
And that is why it now—is so.



THE DREAMER

THEY called him a fool, and I dare say he was,
But this much he very well knew,
That there is no atom too small for a star,
And no dream that's too sweet to come true.

EYES

I SAID, "My deed is hidden. None shall see."
But everywhere I went Eyes peered at me.

I said, "It is the hateful, mocking light
That into the soul's farthest recess pries.
I'll hide me in the night, the kindly night."

. . . But even in the darkness—there were Eyes.

LITTLE SHIPS

DAYS came and went, and the nights fell black
On that blank horizon wan,
And not a sign met the straining eye
—But the little ships sailed on.

Faint hearts sank low, and would fain have turned,
And the Buoys of Strength were gone;
But a man there was who was great of soul
—And the little ships sailed on.

A man there was—as such men there be:
Through the years their souls have shone;
And through the years by their faith and hope
Have the little ships sailed on.

THE FUTURE

JUST over the horizon line
I wonder what may lie.
Our mortal visioning is lost
Where ocean meets the sky.
Our searching fancy wanders far
Across the restless sea,
But over the horizon line
We know not what may be.

Though skies above frown gray and drear,
And ocean stretches bare,
Just over the horizon line
We picture vistas fair.
The little vessels come to port,
And safe their cargoes land
Where smiles the sun in gleaming rays
Upon the golden sand.

O sweet life's mystery divine
Just over the horizon line.

CO-OPERATION

I'LL think a little thought for you,
And you think one for me,
For wonders can be done, 'tis true,
When two hearts thus agree.
Together, we shall mould, erect,
Fine castles in the air;
Be each a noble architect
Who visions great shall dare.
And when our fairy towers stand out
Against the gleaming sky,
There shall not be one craven doubt
Of mounting up so high.
But each with springing step shall start
Upon the spiral climb;
And life and joy shall flood each heart
In consciousness sublime.

So let us each the soul now probe
For vital hopes suppressed;
Let us our false-clad aims disrobe
And put to naked test.
Till, viewing each, with mistless eyes,
Inherent, true desire,
We feel the throbbing of the skies,
In life's sweet, flaming fire.
And know in truth all life is one,
And all minds softly blend;
That each has but self-service done
In serving true a friend.
I'll think a little thought for you,
And you think one for me,
For wonders can be done, 'tis true,
When friendly hearts agree.

FAIRY FEET

IN the paths by love made bright
Fairy feet have trod,
Fairy feet of hopes and joys
That lead up to God.

TWILIGHT

I SAT at the open window
When the toil of the day was done,
And watched the lights of the city
Start twinkling one by one.

And thought of the loving faces
That glow 'neath each little light
When the men and the women are gathered
In the little homes at night.

WHEN BEAUTY WALKS

WHEN Beauty walks upon the hills
And lures us with her smile,
Our outstretched hands forget to close
In sordid greed awhile.

OUT OF DOORS

I WEPT; not cleansing drops, but bitter tears,
The acid effluence of the aching years;
And then I turned me fiercely to the street,
Resolved to damn my soul in its Hell heat.

But as I walked, my mind gave absent chase
To a small bird, and lightly sought to trace
Its airy spiral 'gainst the sapphire sky.
I pondered how it journeyed up so high.

And then my thought was captured by a ray
Of sunlight on a wall not far away;
And later it strayed idly on the breeze
That stirred a rustling murmur through the trees.

I called a neighbor's wag-tailed dog by name,
And turned me home—forgetting why I came.

THE POET'S EAR

A STATUE carved in stone, mute, motionless,
Stood in her place, and sought in vain to give
Unto the passing crowd, the message which
The artist had within her bosom placed.

And as they walked on heedless, one by one,
The fullness in her breast brought agony
Of yearning to be heard—until she prayed
For power to move her lips and cry aloud.

A poet chanced to pass, and saw her form,
And paused and thrilled and felt his heart throb warm.
The statue, seeing, thought her prayer was heard—
And never knew she had not spoke a word!



THE PRESENCE

A GREAT soul sat among us in the room . . .

The table stood in its accustomed place;
The benches stretched, as usual, row on row;
The little bookcase had not changed its pose;
The walls, the floor, the ceiling, bore the same
Color and aspect of their daily wont.
Nothing remarkable disturbed the eye,
Or caught the ear.
We listened, queried, wrote . . . and work went on.

But a great, calm vibration filled the air
And throbbed, a living current, to the heart.
I thrilled in a swift, trembling ecstasy,
And caught a flash of glory from the skies.

. . . A great soul sat among us in the room.

MILESTONES

LAST night he kissed my finger-tips.
Tonight—tonight, he kissed my lips.
Between those kisses twain, Dame Fate
Measures a distance passing great.

THE UNCHASTE

I THREW a kiss at The Man In The Moon,
And the eye of a virgin star
Looked down on me, and deplored to see
That a maiden would go so far!

LOVE'S TANGLEWOOD

AS travellers lost within a wood
A circling course pursue,
So I, lost in the maze of love,
Wind ever back to you.

A DEDICATION

ALOFT on the wings of the night
I roamed in a rhapsody free,
And glimpsed the great monarch of light
Enthroned in the age yet to be.
He summoned the whole of the earth
To pass in a mighty review,
And measured each man for his worth
By the rule of the fair and the true.
And he bade every man from his kingdom depart
But the big and the brave and the loving of heart.

Through the caverns of hollow-voiced fear
And the dungeons of darkest despair
There rings a great echo of cheer
When a spirit of beauty walks there.
O sweetly re-carol their praise
Who herald love's princedom of light!
I sing through the nights and the days—
Though my song be but feeble of flight—
With the whole of my soul, and the whole of my art,
To the big and the brave and the loving of heart.

THE ROSEBUSH

I THREADED the murky streets with their gaunt dwelling places,
Where peaked faces peered at one another with crafty eyes,
And shrivelled hands counted out the penurious savings of niggardly souls.

And passing into the broad highways, I came upon a rose-bush . . .

It stood alone in the tranquil radiance of the morning,
And smiled with a soft delirium of glory.
Its being overflowed into an ecstasy of blossoms.
Life danced and sang aloud in a sheer extravagance of bewildering splendor.

Roses, roses, roses! A rapturous abandonment of glowing roses!

The air grew dizzy with a cloudy fragrance.
There was an idle wafting of stray petals.
Nature throbbed out her soul in giddy sweetness.

. . . The air was redolent with a thousand roses.

WISDOM

I TAUGHT her many things most learned and wise
From the fine lore I'd gathered through the years
Of weighty facts.

And suddenly I looked into her eyes.

And they were deep as silent, changeless pools,
And held within their depths the mysteries
That reach to the foundations of the earth.

. . . And then I closed the book, and said no more.

PERSPECTIVE

YESTERDAY I was crying, and my heart
Was laden with the weight of many things.
And they were great and near and intimate,
And loomed before me darkly.

. . . Yet today
They all seem very small and far away.

HOUSE OF MY DREAMS

IN the House of My Dreams I am sitting tonight,
In the House of My Dreams, where the candlelight
Softly flickers, and lingers bright
On chair and table and wall,
And, by the magic of love, gilds all
With tender beauty; where peace abides,
And ugly passion its image hides;
Where fear and hatred ne'er enter in,
And all the rattle and roar and din
Of the restless world is hushed away
In the gentle phrases that loved lips say.

In the House of My Dreams, where I come to rest
A fleeting while, to divine life's best—
Where all the aims of my soul are blessed
With blossoming life, and aside
Are thrown the false-face and cloak of pride,
The vain self-seeking, the littler heart
Which shrinks from playing the nobler part—
And sit at last with unfaltering grace
And shameless eyes in that holy place
Of adoration; while Beauty glows
Upon my breast like a scarlet rose.

. . . In the House of My Dreams, where the candles shine
Upon your face, as your eyes meet mine,
Eternal Lover, and life's sweet wine
Throbs in our veins, and the beat
Of rapturous music, and fragrance sweet
Of myriad blossoms is in the air;
Where lips are flaming and cheeks are fair,
And souls are purged by the dazzling light
Of love's fulfillment, to purest white;
And glory glows in a thousand gleams:
In the House of My Dreams, in the House of My Dreams.

YOUR HEART AND MY HEART

YOUR heart and my heart, each slow groping on
Bewildered and alone through the gray mist,
And peering for a ray, where no ray shone,
Into the depths that faded into gloom,
Have found each other.

Softly from out the darkness gleams a light,
A tiny, flickering torch that floods the path
And pushes back the lowering walls of night;
And, newborn, through the stillness steal a warmth
And an unutterable sweetness. High above
The morning star shines bright.

. . . O dear, dear love,
Neither shall all time change nor distance part
Your heart and my heart!



ENSHRINED IN BEAUTY

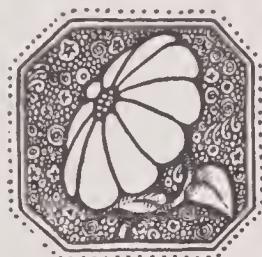
I SAY I have forgotten, and I have—
Forgotten through the daily, busy round
Of careless commonplace; for active minds
Spare not the time to brood upon the past.
The past is done. I've filled the aching void
With sundry newer things—and newer friends.

But in some sudden, unexpected lull
Of the day's course, I chance to hear a sound
Of music, and its sweetness is of you.
Or catch the fleeting beauty of a ray
Of sunshine, or the fragrance of a rose,
And in each thrill of pleasure there is you.
The wonder of a woodland vale in spring,
The violet softness of the twilight hour,
The glistening morning dew upon a flower:
The rapture of my soul in all of these,
In all of life, holds you; its sufferings—you.

And in the best I am, the best I do,
O dear one I've “forgotten”—there is you!



Here ends "Green Wings," a book of poems written by Dorothy Leeming and designed and illustrated by Gordon Ertz. This is one of five hundred copies printed at Chicago, Illinois, U. S. A., June, 1921, this being Number





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